

# Initiative 2015

## Task Force Reports with Recommendations

Teaching and Learning

Discovering and Innovating

Working for Kansas

April 8, 2008  
Modified May 8, 2008



## Introduction

On January 29, 2008, Chancellor Robert Hemenway convened the Initiative 2015 task forces to officially kick off the planning process and charge the task forces. The task forces met over the next two months to develop the recommendations contained in this report.



## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Table of Contents.....	5
Teaching and Learning Task Force Recommendations .....	7
Discovering and Innovating Task Force Recommendations.....	9
Working for Kansas Task Force Recommendations.....	10
Teaching and Learning Task Force Background and Rationale of Recommendations .....	12
Recommendation 1: Educational Expectations .....	12
Recommendation 2: Defining Learner Outcomes.....	13
Recommendation 3: Enhancing the Educational Experience .....	14
Recommendation 4: Documenting Learner Outcomes.....	15
Recommendation 5: Diversity of the Learning Environment.....	16
Discovering and Innovating Task Force Background and Rationale of Recommendations .....	18
Recommendation 1: Infrastructure.....	18
Recommendation 2: Raising the Research Bar.....	19
Recommendation 3: Communication.....	20
Recommendation 4: Training.....	21
Recommendation 5: Collaboration.....	22
Recommendation 6: Rewards and Recognition.....	23
Working for Kansas Task Force Background and Rationale of Recommendations .....	26
Recommendation 1: Expand reward systems for service to Kansas.....	26
Recommendation 2: Identify and support an outreach and partnership individual or organizational entity .....	27
Recommendation 2.1: KU should host expert dialogues .....	28
Recommendation 2.2: Enhance existing partnerships and establish new ones across the State.....	29
Recommendation 2.3: Statewide visibility: Develop physical locations and partner affiliations .....	30
Appendix: Teaching and Leadership Characteristics and Hallmarks.....	31



## Teaching and Learning Task Force Recommendations

### ***Recommendation 1: Educational Expectations***

The University of Kansas will communicate clearly – to current and prospective students -- the set of characteristics expected of undergraduate, graduate and professional students in order to succeed at KU. These characteristics (see appendix) include high-quality academic performance, scholarly engagement, participation in extracurricular activities and service to the community. KU will also communicate these expectations to all other educational stakeholders. While these characteristics are not requirements, they do represent a higher and broader measure for students and the university to use in assessing admission and enrollment choices. Further, KU should seek authority to implement comprehensive undergraduate admissions standards that are consistent with these characteristics.

### ***Recommendation 2: Defining Learner Outcomes***

Every academic program at the University of Kansas will have clear and measurable objectives -- goals that indicate the expected outcome of a KU undergraduate, graduate or professional education. These objectives extend beyond degree programs, and will reflect the overarching goals of a KU education, addressing both the academic achievements and the personal characteristics that serve as hallmarks of a KU graduate (see appendix). Academic programs and KU as a whole will examine educational practices -- inside and outside of class -- to ensure those practices align with the stated goals.

### ***Recommendation 3: Enhancing the Educational Experience***

The faculty of the University of Kansas will utilize teaching methods and learning strategies that improve the learning environment for all students. These are methods and strategies validated by research, and include 1) incorporating required small-group learning communities into all KU programs, 2) integrating appropriate active learning strategies into the instruction of all disciplines, 3) promoting peer mentoring and instruction involving advanced students, 4) offering a diverse group of one-credit seminar courses that ease student transitions and promote academic engagement, and 5) supporting the professional development of KU faculty as they reflect on and improve their teaching practices. These strategies will strengthen the partnership among students, faculty and staff as they engage in the process of learning.

### ***Recommendation 4: Documenting Learner Outcomes***

The University of Kansas will demonstrate that undergraduate, graduate and professional students have met the overarching goals of a KU education (see appendix). This will happen in multiple ways. KU will support individual academic programs as they identify and develop specific documentation and evaluation tools. This support includes incentives to faculty and departments to define outcomes, develop assessment tools, and implement and utilize the results in order to improve their academic programs.

### ***Recommendation 5: Diversity of the Learning Environment***

The University of Kansas will be a more diverse learning environment -- including students, faculty and staff -- that reflects the changing demographics of the state and nation. KU must be mindful of the value all aspects of diversity bring to the university and its learning environment. This includes geographic, socio-economic, first-generation and language diversity. Achieving

this goal will require a partnership with K-12 education, local communities and others to ensure preparedness and develop multiple pathways to a college education. It will also require increased efforts in student recruitment, targeted scholarship funding, and a high degree of first-year and ongoing support. The recruitment of international students will also receive greater attention, along with the recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and staff.

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force Recommendations

### ***Recommendation 1: Infrastructure***

KU should undertake a comprehensive effort to rethink the infrastructure necessary to support world-class research and creative activities. The goal of this effort must be to lower the barriers to success in a globally interconnected world with enormous opportunities but limited resources. Enhanced success in this environment will require hard decisions in terms of what to invest in and support locally and what to acquire from the global marketplace.

### ***Recommendation 2: Raising the Research Bar***

The University of Kansas should identify and emphasize research and innovation in areas in which we have great depth, which lend themselves to multidisciplinary study, and that represent emerging opportunities. KU should then actively recruit researchers with demonstrated excellence to enhance these programs. KU should involve KUEA, the State, philanthropic foundations, and other agencies to raise funds for the support of research and scholarship, particularly through the support of new faculty positions, faculty retention, and research programs and activities. Based upon this rationale, a strategic planning process would be implemented to establish priorities, goals and objectives, design an implementation plan, and secure funding to realize this vision.

### ***Recommendation 3: Communication***

Expand public communication efforts and create novel communication forums that will continually inform the state and nation that KU is a transformative leader in discovery and innovation. Pioneering modes of communication will be utilized such as innovative internet formats and advertising enterprises. The goal is to inform and impress Kansans, U.S. and world citizens, and the international community of scholars about the exciting research and accomplishments at the University of Kansas.

### ***Recommendation 4: Training***

The University of Kansas should generate enhanced support for graduate students to make us more competitive in attracting the best and brightest junior research scholars. To further set us apart, KU should develop more innovative and multidisciplinary integrated education and research programs across the campuses.

### ***Recommendation 5: Collaboration***

KU should make major efforts to promote collaborative interdisciplinary research and creative activities involving its faculty and students. These efforts should include increased collaborations both within and between KU's campuses, with industry partners, and with other institutions around the world.

### ***Recommendation 6: Rewards and Recognition***

KU should develop a broader set of standards and metrics as the basis for recognizing, acknowledging, and rewarding faculty for discovery and innovation.

## Working for Kansas Task Force Recommendations

### ***Recommendation 1: Expand reward systems for service to Kansas***

Create, expand, and diversify reward/incentive systems to better encourage and recognize units, faculty, staff, students, and community partners who contribute to service and outreach for the state of Kansas.

### ***Recommendation 2: Identify and support an outreach and partnership individual or organizational entity***

Identify and support an outreach and partnership entity to coordinate and facilitate KU's outreach activities among its various campuses. This unit should promote awareness of, sensitivity to, and recognition of existing and emerging state needs as well as generate models for service partnerships and dialogue. Tasks would include coordinating, prioritizing, and cataloguing key outreach activities. This entity should also promote service among academic units and the diverse communities of Kansas. KU auxiliary units could help the outreach and partnership unit to identify opportunities for greater coordination of KU outreach initiatives.

#### ***Recommendation 2.1: KU should host expert dialogues***

The outreach and partnership individual or entity should organize creative conversations with partners to identify and prioritize state needs and how they can be addressed collaboratively. Once those needs have been identified, the university should focus its efforts to become both effective and visible in attending to those needs.

#### ***Recommendation 2.2: Enhance existing partnerships and establish new ones across the State***

We recognize the needs of Kansas can not be identified by KU alone. The outreach and partnership individual or entity should increase strategic external partnerships and affiliations across the state by serving as a facilitator to internal discussions among KU units and fostering dialogue with the range of Kansas stakeholders. The goal is to leverage university resources toward sustained, visible, and evolving partnerships that meet the needs of Kansas.

#### ***Recommendation 2.3: Statewide visibility: Develop physical locations and partner affiliations***

Establish and support a network of KU sites and/or affiliations around the state to serve as two-way access points for outreach and service. KU outreach and partnership activities should utilize existing KU facilities, such as the Area Health Education Centers and, and seek out opportunities to utilize sites of local affiliates or partners.

Teaching and Learning Task Force  
Background and Rationale of Recommendations

## ***Teaching and Learning Task Force***

### **Recommendation 1: Educational Expectations**

***Recommendation: The University of Kansas will communicate clearly – to current and prospective students -- the set of characteristics expected of undergraduate, graduate and professional students in order to succeed at KU. These characteristics (see appendix) include high-quality academic performance, scholarly engagement, participation in extracurricular activities and service to the community. KU will also communicate these expectations to all other educational stakeholders. While these characteristics are not requirements, they do represent a higher and broader measure for students and the university to use in assessing admission and enrollment choices. Further, KU should seek authority to implement comprehensive undergraduate admissions standards that are consistent with these characteristics.***

**Background:** The characteristics necessary for success at KU transcend current basic state admissions standards. These expectations should be articulated as a positive challenge to current and prospective students, not as an obstacle to admission or graduation.

KU wants all of its students to succeed. Degree completion is an important measure of how well KU and its students have achieved their goals. Success hinges on solid academic preparation in foundational skills. In addition, students who become actively engaged in scholarly inquiry, and who work to improve the welfare of others while enrolled, often are more successful academically and find their college years more rewarding. Finally, academic success requires a level of emotional maturity that enables students to make good choices among an array of activities that compete for time and attention.

KU's basic undergraduate admissions standards, by themselves, do not adequately convey to students the university's high expectations. To thrive at KU, students must possess characteristics that exceed the minimum statutory requirements. Failure to communicate these expectations clearly -- to students, their families, guidance counselors, school districts and others -- does a disservice to everyone. The same is true for KU's graduate and professional programs, each of which sets its own expectations and admissions standards.

**Rationale:** Articulating expectations clearly will enhance the overall quality of those seeking admission to KU. In turn, this will increase the likelihood that a student will benefit fully from the opportunity to study and learn at KU. As a result, a higher percentage of students will graduate and more of them will have the hallmarks all KU alumni should aspire to possess (see appendix).

## Teaching and Learning Task Force

### Recommendation 2: Defining Learner Outcomes

**Recommendation:** *Every academic program at the University of Kansas will have clear and measurable objectives -- goals that indicate the expected outcome of a KU undergraduate, graduate or professional education. These objectives extend beyond degree programs, and will reflect the overarching goals of a KU education, addressing both the academic achievements and the personal characteristics that serve as hallmarks of a KU graduate (see appendix). Academic programs and KU as a whole will examine educational practices -- inside and outside of class -- to ensure those practices align with the stated goals.*

**Background:** The plan for a 2006-07 KU pilot test – “Documenting Undergraduate and Graduate Learning Success” – noted that “Department faculty often discuss what an accomplished student in their graduate program or undergraduate major should be like upon completion of a degree, including some mix of knowledge, skills, professional preparation, and ability to understand the world. This pilot program . . . provides an opportunity for units to take that conversation to another level by asking how well those goals are being accomplished.” This recommendation builds upon that initiative and seeks to extend it to the whole university.

Academic programs at KU are guided by a variety of goals and standards, starting with a set of defined general education goals for undergraduate studies. Many graduate and professional programs have accreditation bodies or professional associations that provide a structure of essential educational objectives. Nationally, higher education organizations at every level highlight the importance of defining learner outcomes for cognitive skills. Taken as a whole, it is possible for most KU programs at all levels to develop a framework to define broad types of learner outcomes. Periodically, all KU programs should re-evaluate their benchmarks and articulate objectives that are appropriate for their discipline.

Many undergraduate, graduate and professional programs at KU are already working to define specific degree objectives. The University has defined the goals of general education and regularly assesses those goals. It periodically reevaluates those goals based upon the assessment outcomes. In a similar manner, academic programs will define the core knowledge and skills students should attain in completing their degrees. Using the objectives, programs can use the framework to evaluate their success in meeting those objectives and refine their programs accordingly.

The value of this approach extends to such learning opportunities as student organizations, learning communities, Study Abroad, residence halls and other extracurricular or co-curricular activities. All of these activities have an educational dimension that will benefit from having clear and measurable objectives that align with KU’s general education goals.

**Rationale:** Using an overarching set of goals gives individual programs a framework for articulating learner outcomes. It can promote interdisciplinary collaboration among programs whose objectives are similar.

## Teaching and Learning Task Force

### Recommendation 3: Enhancing the Educational Experience

**Recommendation:** *The faculty of the University of Kansas will utilize teaching methods and learning strategies that improve the learning environment for all students. These are methods and strategies validated by research, and include 1) incorporating required small-group learning communities into all KU programs, 2) integrating appropriate active learning strategies into the instruction of all disciplines, 3) promoting peer mentoring and instruction involving advanced students, 4) offering a diverse group of one-credit seminar courses that ease student transitions and promote academic engagement, and 5) supporting the professional development of KU faculty as they reflect on and improve their teaching practices. These strategies will strengthen the partnership among students, faculty and staff as they engage in the process of learning.*

**Background:** Decades of research on human learning have identified strategies that promote learning among students, regardless of abilities and preferred learning styles. While many universities have been slow to incorporate these approaches, KU can take the lead in adopting evidence-based instructional methods that enhance student learning.

These approaches benefit students at all levels and in all phases of their academic careers. However, there are transition points that are especially critical to the ultimate success of students. Examples include the first year of undergraduate, graduate or professional school; the first year for transfer students; and the third year of medical school. Methods validated by research, such as those recommended above, are especially effective during these transitions.

Large-enrollment introductory lecture classes can be taught effectively in ways that engage students. Even so, new students -- incoming freshmen and transfers -- often find such classes daunting. Retention may suffer as a result. Students accustomed to small classes may question the quality of teaching in such classes as they make the adjustment to life at KU. The quality of the student learning experience benefits from the regular examination and improvement of instructional methods and the instructional environment. KU remains committed to fostering and valuing inquiry that results in the improvement of teaching.

The transition from undergraduate education to graduate education can be confusing for students. In addition to attaining knowledge, a graduate student must also contribute to the body of knowledge. This transition can be particularly difficult for international students.

**Rationale:** The anticipated outcomes of the use of teaching methods and strategies validated by research include increased retention of first-year and transfer students, improved student performance during transition times, and the more effective use of tuition dollars. Implicit in this recommendation is an obligation on the part of students to take greater responsibility for their own education. Efforts by the faculty to utilize methods and strategies that enhance the educational experience depend on students participating actively in the learning process. Ultimately, the student-teacher relationship is a partnership with mutual expectations, benefits and consequences.

## Teaching and Learning Task Force

### Recommendation 4: Documenting Learner Outcomes

**Recommendation:** *The University of Kansas will demonstrate that undergraduate, graduate and professional students have met the overarching goals of a KU education (see appendix). This will happen in multiple ways. KU will support individual academic programs as they identify and develop specific documentation and evaluation tools. This support includes incentives to faculty and departments to define outcomes, develop assessment tools, and implement and utilize the results in order to improve their academic programs.*

**Background:** A variety of methods are used to document learner outcomes at KU. For example, an innovative interview process helps assess seniors' mastery of the general education goals. In addition, the School of Medicine surveys graduates' residency program directors to compare the performance of its graduates to graduates of other medical schools. The oral defense of a dissertation is a more public example of documentation. As each academic program defines specific outcomes and adopts tools to assess these outcomes, these tools can be added to the senior interview, the residency survey and other existing evaluations to create an institutional portfolio.

In the portfolio approach, samples of student work from courses are gathered. These archives are reviewed for program- and institutional-level achievement, using standards and criteria provided by KU faculty or external organizations. At KU, there are many examples of programs that review archives/portfolios of student work. They use benchmarks defined within the field or profession to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their academic programs.

Standardized tests of general intellectual skill in undergraduate education can complement, but cannot replace, a more comprehensive assessment. KU's overarching goals, and the individual program objectives under those goals, do not lend themselves to documentation by traditional standardized testing alone. Documenting the hallmarks identified in the appendix requires judgment that only faculty members can provide.

**Rationale:** Broadening the measures of educational goals will build confidence within the university that students are meeting both the overarching and the field-specific goals for education. Comprehensive assessments provide information to faculty members and departments. That information can drive a continual process that improves individual academic programs and the university as a whole.

## Teaching and Learning Task Force

### Recommendation 5: Diversity of the Learning Environment

**Recommendation:** *The University of Kansas will be a more diverse learning environment -- including students, faculty and staff – that reflects the changing demographics of the state and nation. KU must be mindful of the value all aspects of diversity bring to the university and its learning environment. This includes geographic, socio-economic, first-generation and language diversity. Achieving this goal will require a partnership with K-12 education, local communities and others to ensure preparedness and develop multiple pathways to a college education. It will also require increased efforts in student recruitment, targeted scholarship funding, and a high degree of first-year and ongoing support. The recruitment of international students will also receive greater attention, along with the recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and staff.*

**Background:** According to a recent report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (*Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State and Race/ Ethnicity, 1992 to 2022*):

The racial/ethnic composition of Kansas's public high school graduating classes will begin to show more diversification over the coming decade and beyond. [T]he nation as a whole is undergoing sweeping changes in the racial/ethnic composition of its population. In Kansas, as in other states the big changes are the result of rapid growth in the number of Hispanic high school students and graduates, coupled with a shrinking number of White non-Hispanics in the educational pipeline.

The report suggests the number of white high school graduates in Kansas will drop by more than 20% between 2004-05 and 2014-15, while the number of black graduates will drop by more than 26%. At the same time, the number of Hispanic graduates will increase by 39%. These changes are already evident at KU. Programs such as TRIO, Hawk Link, PREP, Bridge and Summer Research Experience help students transition to KU and succeed academically.

International enrollment has declined at KU, in Kansas, and nationwide in recent years. This may reflect such factors as post-9/11 security concerns, U.S. immigration restrictions, the rising cost of enrollment, and KU's higher admissions standards for non-resident applicants.

The recommendation endorses and extends KU's 2004 "Policy on Diversity of the Student Body" [http://www.diversity.ku.edu/student\\_diversity.shtml](http://www.diversity.ku.edu/student_diversity.shtml).

**Rationale:** As a state-assisted public university, the learning environment at KU must reflect more closely the demographic changes taking place in the state and nation. More than just a matter of equity, it is a question of economic survival for Kansas. The bioscience, aviation, energy, agriculture and professional service sectors that dominate employment in the state require an increasing number of university-educated people. Those sectors will be starved for qualified employees unless KU and other universities attract, retain and graduate an increasingly diverse student body (from Kansas and elsewhere). The diminished enrollment of international students represents a special challenge to graduate programs that rely on this population. It also represents a loss for KU's global perspective and cultural vibrancy. The same is true of KU's faculty and staff. While the university has made progress in the hiring of a more diverse faculty and staff, it continues to reflect the relative lack of diversity in the student body. For KU to recruit a more diverse enrollment, it must have a more diverse faculty/staff.

Discovering and Innovating Task Force  
Background and Rationale of Recommendations

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force

### Recommendation 1: Infrastructure

**Recommendation:** *KU should undertake a comprehensive effort to rethink the infrastructure necessary to support world-class research and creative activities. The goal of this effort must be to lower the barriers to success in a globally interconnected world with enormous opportunities but limited resources. Enhanced success in this environment will require hard decisions in terms of what to invest in and support locally and what to acquire from the global marketplace.*

**Background:** Technology continues to transform the way we conduct research and scholarship and the way we interact with each other. Barriers to progress are created when transformative technologies exist but cannot be easily accessed by faculty and students. The costs and complexities of these technologies require innovative models to promote and sustain collaboration and funding across the university and with other entities throughout the world. KU should seek partnerships with other universities, government organizations, and corporations aimed at securing access to cutting edge technologies and infrastructure irrespective of where these technologies are located. In the global, networked, “flat” world that is rapidly emerging, “access” to advanced technologies by KU scholars will be more important than location in many cases, while in others the presence of state of the art facilities located on campus will remain absolutely essential. Strategic investments must also be made in the people that make these technologies function optimally.

In a world of limited resources, the analysis of costs and benefits should examine the entire business model that undergirds the university. What functions can we and should we outsource? For example, it may soon be less expensive to lease storage on the Internet than to fill warehouses with servers. Reducing the costs for some infrastructure may then free up resources that can be used to enhance our central mission of discovering and disseminating knowledge.

To maximize creative synergy, the push to create one university in symbol and substance should further accelerate. This must occur in a variety of small and large ways. For example, videoconferencing should be ubiquitous and there should be open electronic access to all KU libraries by faculty and students regardless of location. Further efforts should be made to ease travel between campuses along with efforts to create a one university calendar of events, identical business and management approaches, and shared core research services. Finally, efforts to address the chronic problem of deferred maintenance should be redoubled.

**Rationale:** The Task Force believes that a concerted focus on infrastructure within and across campuses is necessary to enable sustained progress given the opportunities and barriers that exist at multiple levels. This will require a thorough analysis of our current practices followed by well-informed, rational decisions about what to invest in and support internally and what to acquire from the global marketplace. The goal of the decision-making process should be to further promote internationally recognized strengths and facilitate success in emerging areas in which KU is poised to impact. We can and should embrace opportunities to enable new technologies that advance the central mission of the university.

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force

### Recommendation 2: Raising the Research Bar

**Recommendation:** *The University of Kansas should identify and emphasize research and innovation in areas in which we have great depth, which lend themselves to multidisciplinary study, and that represent emerging opportunities. KU should then actively recruit researchers with demonstrated excellence to enhance these programs. KU should involve KUEA, the State, philanthropic foundations, and other agencies to raise funds for the support of research and scholarship, particularly through the support of new faculty positions, faculty retention, and research programs and activities. Based upon this rationale, a strategic planning process would be implemented to establish priorities, goals and objectives, design an implementation plan, and secure funding to realize this vision.*

**Background:** KU's excellence in research is based upon the body of scholars who undertake such endeavors. As such, our research excellence is founded upon the resident faculty, new faculty called to service, and the internal support provided for these individuals. In order to build such a community of scholars, KU must identify and actively recruit individuals with national and international reputations in selected fields of inquiry. It is most prudent to identify areas of excellence and build upon them while simultaneously moving into fields in which KU would be remiss to overlook. When creating a new area of research excellence, it should not be done at the expense of an existing area of strength. The goal should be to maintain continuity of excellence and to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

A concerted effort must be undertaken to identify areas of scholarship in which KU already occupies a leadership role. The existence of a bedrock community of scholars within KU's ranks and a desirability among graduate and postgraduate researchers to participate in those programs serve as ideal criteria for measuring existing strengths. Such fields should be broad and, ideally, bring together faculty from diverse academic units and centers, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of modern research.

Concomitantly, selected new and unique fields of inquiry recognized nationally and internationally as needed or emerging areas of scholarship should be identified and new programs established. To the extent possible, new hires should be coordinated so as to bring to KU two or more scholars in a chosen area, whose programs are synergistic and will collectively elevate our existing strengths, or whose scholarship bridges intellectual gaps between already recognized programs to create a unique environment for intellectual growth and research productivity. Hiring teams of researchers will represent the most effective means of advancing research in emerging fields not already represented among KU's areas of excellence.

Funding growth in research at KU will require new and innovative means for securing external monies through aggressive fund raising from sources, such as the State, foundations, and other agencies. This is particularly critical when designing attractive start-up, salary, and research packages necessary to recruit scholars with well-established programs.

**Rationale:** While KU strives for excellence across its entire faculty, in order to enhance existing strengths, build ties between already strong programs, and move into new and exciting arenas of international research, KU must aggressively seek and recruit those individuals with a demonstrated track record of research excellence. Such new growth can only be achieved if the means by which funds are raised to support research are expanded and revised.

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force

### Recommendation 3: Communication

**Recommendation:** *Expand public communication efforts and create novel communication forums that will continually inform the state and nation that KU is a transformative leader in discovery and innovation. Pioneering modes of communication will be utilized such as innovative internet formats and advertising enterprises. The goal is to inform and impress Kansans, U.S. and world citizens, and the international community of scholars about the exciting research and accomplishments at the University of Kansas.*

**Background:** KU's public communication efforts must be expanded and broadened to include a new emphasis on emerging communication modalities. Researchers and department leaders need to rely on a modern communications office that can provide appropriate attention to new research information from our faculty and communicate this to local and national media outlets. An aggressive, pro-active approach is required in today's information-overloaded environment. The University needs to take command of its own communication with the community, state, and nation. The target audience for our novel modes of communication needs to include both the lay public and scientists in Kansas, throughout the United States and the world. This can only be done by taking a focused and original approach, aimed at building excitement about KU scholarship and creative endeavors.

One approach at novel communication is to use high-impact, stunning visual effects to highlight research at popular sporting events. Exciting research undertakings can be filmed and uploaded to sites such as YouTube for Internet users to watch. Research information can also be uploaded to other sites, including iTunes and Yahoo. This information must be eye-catching to compete with the vast amount of information people filter through daily. Websites serving all KU campuses need to be modern, user-friendly, and current. Research dissemination to academic peers can be enhanced by creating web-based open publishing formats.

In order to achieve outstanding communications for the new millennium, a number of changes need to be implemented as soon as possible. We need to expand KU communication offices, making them adept in state-of-the-art communication modes that focus on research activities. An adequate internal vetting procedure will be necessary to ensure that the information KU disseminates is accurate, verifiable, and ethical. We need to aggressively expand the direct contacts between KU experts in various fields and media reporters. We need to create forums between KU faculty and government officials to inform them of research initiatives and to aggressively make researchers available for consultation. We need to train faculty to discuss research in a way that the public can appreciate. Faculty need to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to speak and write about the public importance of their work and to share this with KU communication staff on a regular basis. We need to advertise KU research activities in novel ways on the internet, TV, radio, print media, and public events (i.e. sporting events) that will engage the population in exciting research innovation at KU. We need to provide the infrastructure to develop and support state-of-the-art websites throughout the KU system. The online publication and dissemination of KU research need to be expanded and supported.

**Rationale:** Support from private corporations, government entities, non-profit organizations, and private citizens for research at KU is more likely to occur if these supporters are personally excited about research at KU. Building enthusiasm for KU research requires an active, aggressive, innovative and sustained approach led by a fully funded communications office that is deeply knowledgeable about discovery and innovation at KU.

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force

### Recommendation 4: Training

**Recommendation:** *The University of Kansas should generate enhanced support for graduate students to make us more competitive in attracting the best and brightest junior research scholars. To further set us apart, KU should develop more innovative and multidisciplinary integrated education and research programs across the campuses.*

**Background:** Faculty depend on high quality graduate students to leverage and build upon their research innovation. If we as an institution are to grow in discovery and innovation, we must have mechanisms available to attract the best and the brightest graduate students. Many of KU's top competitors are offering continuous full support packages that allow faculty to recruit the best students. While TA support has been an important source of funding for many graduate students, it can limit the student's opportunities for gaining research experiences in an unencumbered fashion supporting the goal of discovery and innovation. The ability to attract highest quality graduate students will also enhance KU's ability to recruit the highest quality faculty at all levels.

Some of the most exciting research and discovery is currently being pursued at the crossroads of traditional disciplines and these areas are attracting the best and brightest students. Today's competitive graduate students are looking for a unique training experience that will eventually set them apart from their cohort on the job market. Innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to training have the potential to accomplish this goal for the student. In order to support students' individual interests and training needs in these areas, we must develop innovative and multidisciplinary education and research programs across the campuses. Students must also be exposed to the cultures of different countries and be prepared to work in an increasingly flat and interconnected world.

Barriers for students and faculty to engage in creative educational programs, such as a multidisciplinary clinical scientist MD/PhD, must be broken down so that the requirements for students to engage in and create new opportunities are not overwhelming. Funding for these multidisciplinary efforts should be generated across traditional department lines to both recruit and support these cross-cutting students.

To succeed with this type of innovative educational approach, it will be crucial to consider the unique talents and needs of entrepreneurial persons, as they are not likely to approach opportunities and problems from traditional, academic vantage points. As such, it will be important to reevaluate currently accepted standards and credentials and determine appropriate criteria to use in selecting participants and rewarding their success.

Input from outside sources, such as industry, should be sought to develop innovative educational programs. Experiential learning opportunities such as internships should be incorporated into the curriculum at the graduate as well as undergraduate levels. Opportunities for faculty to periodically engage in industry and professional experiences should also be encouraged. Support for these programs should be sought from the related industries and professions. Participation in these nontraditional experiential development activities should be encouraged, recognized and celebrated.

**Rationale:** Outstanding research by faculty is best leveraged and supported by outstanding graduate students. The best and brightest students are guaranteed support from many institutions. These students must be attracted to KU through enhanced opportunities such as more innovative and multidisciplinary education and research programs that will speak to students' future needs.

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force

### Recommendation 5: Collaboration

**Recommendation:** *KU should make major efforts to promote collaborative interdisciplinary research and creative activities involving its faculty and students. These efforts should include increased collaborations both within and between KU's campuses, with industry partners, and with other institutions around the world.*

**Background:** Much of the exciting research and discovery that is currently being pursued by scholars around the world is at the intersection of traditional areas of study and inquiry. While discipline-based research is fundamental to the university's research enterprise, interdisciplinary research is an increasingly robust source of new knowledge. Indeed, it seems that the largest unsolved problems of the world are complex with solutions that will require multilevel and interdisciplinary approaches to research and discovery. To compete internationally and maintain our status as a first-rate research and teaching institution, KU should create the necessary environment to foster collaborative and interdisciplinary research and scholarship that includes the varied perspectives available from the arts, humanities, computational sciences, social sciences, natural and health sciences.

KU should take several steps to enhance collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship. KU should aggressively promote awareness of existing research and collaborative opportunities available on all KU campuses in areas like cancer research, neuroscience, social science and policy research, and the arts and humanities. New research programs that intersect traditional areas of scholarship should be established and KU should emphasize the recruitment of collaborative and interdisciplinary faculty when possible. KU should make further investments in infrastructure, cross-unit exchanges, and faculty development activities that support a vigorous exchange of ideas among faculty and students and academic and research units.

A concerted effort should be undertaken to identify and eliminate impediments to research collaborations as well as to identify ways the institution may encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary research, such as establishing regular shuttle service between campuses, developing websites that identify and promote collaborative research opportunities, establishing grant programs to seed exciting new collaborative and interdisciplinary research ideas, establishing new shared research facilities that promote interdisciplinary research, providing automatic cross campus access to online and on-campus library resources for students and faculty, and establishing enhanced video conferencing capabilities that effectively link all campuses.

**Rationale:** While there continues to be a great need for discipline-based research, the Task Force believed that the nature of research and scholarship is increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary. It follows that to remain competitive as a leading research institution KU should remove barriers that exist for interdisciplinary research, enhance existing interdisciplinary relationships, and promote new collaborations between faculty and students on all campuses.

## Discovering and Innovating Task Force

### Recommendation 6: Rewards and Recognition

**Recommendation:** *KU should develop a broader set of standards and metrics as the basis for recognizing, acknowledging, and rewarding faculty for discovery and innovation.*

**Background:** Kansas University systems that recognize accomplishments, such as the tenure and promotion process, should be broadened to reflect changes in how cutting-edge scholarship is accomplished, supported, and disseminated. The current, one-size-fits-all, system fails to recognize the rigors and the benefits to KU associated with an array of outcomes such as patents, partnerships with private industries, and research grants from non-traditional sources.

Scholarship is sometimes more quickly translated into the public domain with invention disclosures, patents, and licenses as opposed to publishing experimental results in research journals. In addition, collaborative research may be more effective in preparing students for the next generation of interdisciplinary employment opportunities. In a funding environment where interdisciplinary and translational research is encouraged, the scholarly and creative contributions of a co-investigator in a large interdisciplinary grant may be greater than a single discipline submission as the principal investigator. Likewise, the importance of the work by the co-investigator in promoting the mission of the University may be greater than the non-collaborative project.

Our reward system also needs to accommodate changes in research funding sources. For example, in the future there may be more research dollars funding academic biomedical research originating from foundations and societies as compared with federal sources. The quality of funding sources should be examined based on the rigors of the review process, not the actual source itself. Furthermore, the faculty time invested in novel educational experiences such as organizing internships, and private industry rotations should be rewarded as they create direct links to industry and non-profit organizations.

**Rationale:** A flexible and adaptive system that rewards accomplishments in scholarship and creative activities will enhance KU's ability to recruit and retain the highest caliber of faculty. The goal is not to lessen the standards for tenure, promotion, and other rewards such as merit salary increases, but to adapt our criteria in ways that are appropriate to the university's mission in a world where progress often depends on collaboration across disciplines and with entities far beyond the traditional confines of academia.



Working for Kansas  
Background and Rationale of Recommendations

## Working for Kansas Task Force

### Recommendation 1: Expand reward systems for service to Kansas

**Recommendation:** *Create, expand, and diversify reward/incentive systems to better recognize units, faculty, staff, students, and community partners who contribute to service and outreach for the state of Kansas.*

**Background:** Service to the state of Kansas and the larger community in general needs to be acknowledged and rewarded as a valued part of the educational enterprise at KU. Faculty, staff, and students are more likely to have the highest level of participation in outreach aspects of KU's mission if it directly affects their evaluation, promotion, status, or compensation. An enhanced reward system could help KU become a leader for the state in effectively promoting engagement between the university and the residents of Kansas.

The value of service needs to be elevated and the connections among service, scholarship and teaching need to be strongly recognized and supported. One way KU could help promote this is by clearly linking the service mission with the research mission of the university. Support needs to start at the highest levels of the university and filter down to the level of individual units.

Strategic use of new hires, fellowships, re-allocation of effort, and release time could increase staff and faculty involvement in service to the state of Kansas. Development of a program that offered students and faculty the option of "a semester in Kansas" similar to a study abroad experience, might be helpful. Students could use the knowledge they gain to strengthen their research while at the same time, improving KU's relationship with the community.

Rotating in and out of service to the state of Kansas, and reporting on that service, should be viewed as an expectation of every unit.

**Rationale:** Rewards and incentives for units, faculty, students, and staff to participate in serving the state of Kansas are essential if the university expects serious attention or effort regarding this goal. Incentives can create a climate where grassroots efforts can flourish.

## Working for Kansas Task Force

### Recommendation 2: Identify and support an outreach and partnership individual or organizational entity

**Recommendation:** *Identify and support an outreach and partnership individual or organizational entity to coordinate and facilitate KU's outreach activities. This entity should promote awareness of, sensitivity to and recognition of existing and emerging state needs as well as generate models for service partnerships and dialogue. Tasks would include coordinating, prioritizing, and cataloguing key outreach activities. This entity should also promote service among academic units and the diverse communities of Kansas. KU auxiliary units could help the outreach and partnership unit to identify opportunities for greater coordination of KU outreach initiatives.*

**Background:** The strength that KU could bring to its responsibilities to "Work for Kansas" lies in its ability to make its knowledge and expertise accessible and applicable to challenges facing individuals and institutions within Kansas. There are many examples of excellent outreach and engagement activities currently on-going between KU individuals/units and their various constituencies. The breadth of these activities and the distribution of the relevant expertise are extremely diffuse. KU needs a central entity facilitating and tracking the entirety of KU's outreach and engagement to amplify its impact. We recognize that outreach and engagement are most effectively accomplished at the unit level; we do not urge centralization of outreach activities. The broad range of these outreach and service programs make it difficult for KU to effectively communicate the range of its efforts to key stakeholders and hinders the institution's ability to identify gaps in its outreach and engagement activities. The university would benefit from having an organizational entity that could provide access for new outreach opportunities, facilitate ongoing service, and quickly identify outreach and engagement efforts currently underway.

The outreach entity could also have a web-based component to it. There are excellent examples from other peer institutions that host a "Clearing House" website that provides links to resources for the State. An example is the University of Iowa's "Resources for Iowans."

There are several models that could be used for meeting these responsibilities. The Task Force views the primary functions of this entity to be providing seamless access to KU for community and state agencies via a central point of contact that can:

- connect the community to KU resources by serving as a likely first point of contact for collaboration by statewide (and other) partners
- Create a database and serve as a central repository for documenting existing KU partnerships
- foster a climate of partnership for priorities that KU can help the State address.

**Rationale:** KU has various research and teaching centers to support these activities. An entity that facilitates access to KU resources for outreach and service opportunities can provide valuable institutional support to KU's ability to serve Kansans.

## Working for Kansas Task Force

### Recommendation 2.1: KU should host expert dialogues

**Recommendation:** *The outreach and partnership individual or entity should organize and expand creative conversations with partners to identify and prioritize state needs and how they can be addressed collaboratively. Once those needs have been identified, the university should focus its efforts to become both effective and visible in attending to those needs.*

**Background:** Hosting dialogues is a way to position KU as a listener and perhaps a catalyst for collaboration with potential statewide partners. KU could host a variety of conferences and facilitate working partnerships from across the state to address the most pressing needs of the state.

KU has the opportunity to convene an annual meeting highlighting matters of critical importance to the State designed to bring together community leaders, the general public, and KU faculty, staff and students to discuss issues confronting the state (i.e. rural depopulation). This could be a traveling program that utilizes KU affiliates or partners in host communities.

An example of this type of convening role is KU's Center for International Business Education and Research's (CIBER) "Global Kansas" program, patterned on Leadership Kansas and partnering with the Kansas Department of Commerce. Although still in the planning stages this could be a powerful model for other such programs like "Green Kansas," "Arts in Kansas," or "Energy Kansas."

Rural Health Education and Services, Telemedicine, the Area Health Education Centers, the Edwards Campus, and the Medical Center in Kansas City have extensive networks across Kansas that model this kind of hosting and collaborative enterprise.

**Rationale:** KU can enhance its role in the state as a partner in addressing state needs by using the resources it already possesses and hosting some highly visible and timely statewide meetings focused on Kansas issues. KU is an important resource collaborator for the stakeholders of Kansas. Having an entity responsible for maximizing KU's visibility and focus seems critical for the university.

## Working for Kansas Task Force

### Recommendation 2.2: Enhance existing partnerships and establish new ones across the State

**Recommendation:** *We recognize the needs of Kansas can not be identified by KU alone. The outreach and partnership individual or organizational entity should increase strategic external partnerships and affiliations across the state by serving as a facilitator to internal discussions among KU units and fostering dialogue with the range of Kansas stakeholders. The goal is to leverage university resources toward sustained, visible, and evolving partnerships that meet the needs of Kansas.*

**Background:** It is important that KU collaborate with its partners in a spirit of hospitality. Collaboration is enhanced when continuity and long-term commitment accompany outreach activities. KU should explore ways to enhance the visibility of sustained partnerships that already exist and create new ones in the state. KU models for the kind of sustained partnerships intended are the Area Health Education Centers, the Work Group for Community Health and Development, and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Combined Arms Center at Ft. Leavenworth.

The Smithsonian Partnership is a good example of the intention of this recommendation. Schools or agencies that have a formal affiliation with the Smithsonian are able to put the logo on their promotional material and receive the increased status the affiliation infers. These types of sustained and visible partnerships should be developed.

**Rationale:** A unit responsible for promoting KU's current outreach activities and creating new partnerships would broaden collaborations and strengthen KU's relationship with the state, regardless of turnover in personnel. Advancing the number of sustained partnerships increases visibility and focuses internal resources.

## Working for Kansas Task Force

### **Recommendation 2.3: Statewide visibility: Develop physical locations and partner affiliations**

***Recommendation: Establish and support a network of KU sites and/or affiliations around the state to serve as two-way access points for outreach and service. The outreach and partnership unit could utilize existing KU facilities, such as the Area Health Education Centers, Capital Center, and Edwards Campus and also seek out opportunities to collaborate with local affiliates or partners.***

**Background:** KU has human capital, both faculty and students, who are willing to serve the state as researchers, teachers, volunteers, performers, administrators, and doctors. KU faculty members generate scholarship that can assist institutions and communities on topics such as water use, medical needs, work force development, educational practices, the arts, and political and civic engagement. KU also has excellent physical facilities and technological capabilities to host seminars and events that could bring community partners together for conferences or workshops.

KU possesses significant expertise valuable to the state of Kansas. It needs a statewide network of physical sites to help focus its energies, like the Extension Service at K-State. KU could take advantage of the KU campuses and other sites across the state using them to facilitate service across a broad spectrum of outreach activities. Work spaces should be identified at KU campuses and other program sites, so that KU collaborators could find a base of operation when working in those locales. If no KU facility is available then KU affiliates might be approached to provide such a base.

KU currently has a mixture of independent efforts, some of which may be in the same region. A shared site or point of contact for various KU units working in support of Kansas would provide opportunities to collaborate and connect to shared resources. Organizing various outreach and partnership activities in any given locale would greatly enhance and strengthen services KU could offer the community.

**Rationale:** KU needs to reinforce its reputation in Kansas as being a true partner with the state. To do this it must demonstrate that it has continuous outreach activities that are supported by the university and accessible to the states residents.

## Appendix: Characteristics and Hallmarks

**The Teaching and Learning Task Force** worked to identify characteristics of successful students and hallmarks of KU graduates. The resulting list reflects a thoughtful conversation and a desire to engage others at KU in this discussion. The intent is to encourage reflection and stimulate action on the part of students, faculty, and the whole KU community. Specifically, it may prompt departments and individual faculty members to address this topic, and may help them align their curriculum and teaching with characteristics and hallmarks of their own.

### ***Candidates for admission to the University of Kansas should exhibit:***

- **Active intellectual capacity and curiosity**, reflected in standardized test scores, previous classroom performance, evidence of critical thinking skills, a broad foundation of knowledge, and a passion for learning;
- **Honesty, self-awareness**, and adherence to ethical norms in the face of ambiguity and peer pressure;
- **Leadership ability**, demonstrated by active group involvement, adaptable problem-solving under stress, thoughtful engagement in civic affairs, the ability to form a community, and experience in service learning;
- **Eagerness to learn and share knowledge**, based on personal and professional maturity, goal-setting, a willingness to take responsibility for academic success, and the recognition that learning is the enterprise of a lifetime;
- **Excellent communications skills** (written, verbal, technological) that support the application of knowledge in the campus, workplace, and community;
- **Global awareness and breadth of thinking**, shown by an appreciation for other cultures, openness to new ideas and alternative ways of thinking, curiosity, tolerance, and respect for the opinions of others; and
- **Creativity and understanding** in conducting research, analyzing results, presenting findings, and responding to criticism.

### ***Graduates of the University of Kansas should exhibit greater:***

- Capacity and eagerness to engage in **research and creative activity**, and to **learn independently** for a lifetime;
- **Civic engagement**, characterized by community service and involvement;
- **Breadth of knowledge** that is interdisciplinary and integrated, with depth in areas of special interest;
- **Global awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity**, based on personal experience and classroom exposure;
- **Vocational focus**, derived from faculty mentoring, awareness of professional options, and a sense of purpose;
- **Personal and professional maturity and integrity**, and the ability to make and pursue appropriate long-term goals;
- **Communications and interpersonal skills**, rooted in critical thinking, objective analysis, and articulate expression; and

- **Loyalty to KU**, and respect for the purposes of higher education, reflected by an ongoing affinity to the institution.

***In order for students to attain the hallmarks of a KU education, the university provides its students with opportunities to:***

- Pursue studies of their choice in an atmosphere of **free academic inquiry**;
- Make use of a wide range of student **support services**, regardless of ability;
- Utilize appropriate **academic facilities**, e.g., libraries, other databases, safe classrooms and labs, campus housing, cultural centers, and recreational space;
- Encounter **excellent faculty** whose focus is on teaching and learning;
- Connect academic pursuits with **vocational and service-learning** interests;
- Receive a degree in an appropriate period of **time**, with as small a **financial burden** as possible;
- Conduct **research** and **creative activity** under the critical guidance of **faculty mentors**;
- Experience a **campus community** that reflects the **diversity** of the world around them; and
- **Exceed** their own expectations.